Therapeutic Abortions Reported By Hospitals in Alberta

For the Year Ended December 31,1989

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HIGHLIGHTS

- In 1989, 6,598 therapeutic abortions were performed in 17 Alberta hospitals with therapeutic abortion committees. Total abortions in 1989 were 5.2% higher than in 1988.

- Calgary and Edmonton hospitals accounted for 84.4% of all abortions in Alberta in 1989, compared to 82.2% in 1988.

- Five hospitals, each performing 200 or more abortions per year, accounted for 90.2% of Alberta's abortions. Three of these five hospitals together performed 5,439 abortions in 1989 (82.4% of the total) which averaged to 1,813 abortions performed annually in each facility.

- In 1989, the Alberta rate of therapeutic abortions per 1,000 females 15 to 44 years of age, was 10.9 compared to 10.4 in 1988. Abortions per 100 live births was 15.4 in 1989, up from 14.9 in 1988.

- Teenagers accounted for 23.6% of all therapeutic abortion patients while 54.9% were between the ages of 20 and 29 years.

- Single women accounted for 66.3% of therapeutic abortion patients while 18.5% were married and 15.2% were either separated, divorced, widowed or living in common-law arrangements.

- In 1989, pregnancies of 12 or fewer weeks of gestation accounted for 94.9% of therapeutic abortions, up from 89.2% in 1989.

- At least one previous induced abortion was reported by 21.7% of therapeutic abortion patients in 1989 while 10.7% reported at least one previous spontaneous abortion.

- The most frequently used initial procedure in 1989 was Suction Dilation and Curettage (D&C), performed in 85.9% of all abortion cases, up from 76.2% of all abortion cases in 1988.

- At least one complication resulting from abortion procedures was reported in 2.6% of the cases, a decrease from 4.5% in 1988.

- Subsequent procedures were performed in 2.0% of all abortion cases, down from 4.0% in 1988.

- In 1989, 7.5% (493) of the patients obtaining abortions underwent sterilization concurrently with the abortion procedure.

- The most recent Canadian data available were for 1988. In this year, Alberta hospitals accounted for 9.5% of all therapeutic abortions performed in Canada.

INTRODUCTION

This publication presents pertinent facts about the women who had therapeutic abortions and the care provided to them in Alberta hospitals during 1989. Specifically, the report includes data related to the following topics: demographic and medical information about the therapeutic abortion patients; the nature of medical procedures used and the consequent complications; average annual rates of abortion in relation to the female population; and the annual level of live births.

Although the focus is on the current Alberta situation, selected historical provincial and national statistics are provided for comparison and trend analysis. Therapeutic abortion data are taken from hospital records reported to Alberta Health. Since the data are also reported to Statistics Canada, the overall comparability of provincial and national statistics is enhanced.

THE ABORTION LAW

In 1969, the Parliament of Canada passed the Criminal Code Amendment Act, which legalized the performance of abortions under specific conditions. Chapter C-34, Section 251, of the Revised Statutes of Canada 1970, outlined the conditions which had to be satisfied for the legal performance of therapeutic abortions, which are as follows:

1. the abortion procedure must be carried out by a qualified physician;

2. the qualified physician may not be a member of the hospital's therapeutic abortion committee;

3. the procedure is permitted only in an accredited or an approved hospital, the former consisting of general hospitals accredited by the Canadian Council of Hospital Accreditation and the latter being hospitals approved by the Provincial Minister of Health; and

4. the decision regarding the termination of pregnancy is placed before the hospital's therapeutic abortion committee. The committee must decide whether or not continuation of the pregnancy "would or would be likely to" endanger the life or health of the female patient.

However, since the Supreme Court of Canada struck down this section of the Criminal Code on January 28, 1988 the following stipulations regarding abortions in Alberta are in effect:

1. to be eligible for reimbursement under Alberta's Health Care Insurance Act the abortion must be carried out in an approved hospital by a qualified physician.

2. the decision regarding the termination of pregnancy rests with the individual and the medical doctor.

3. under Alberta's Hospitals Act, consultation by another physician is required for all procedures involving the termination of pregnancy.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

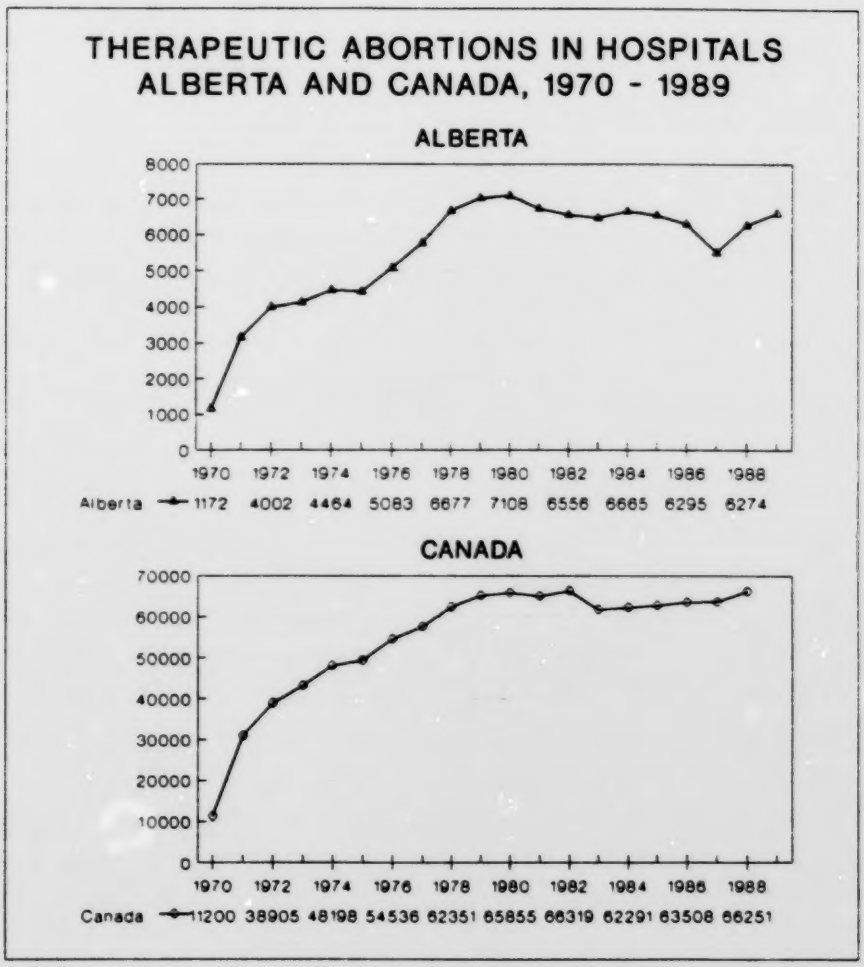
Abortions Performed in Alberta and Canadian Hospitals

A list of hospitals which performed therapeutic abortions in 1989 is provided in Appendix B of this report. In 1989, 6,598 abortions were performed in 17 Alberta hospitals, a 5.2% increase from the 1988 level of 6,274 abortions. A downward trend in the number of abortions performed from 1981 to 1987 appears to have reversed in the past two years, but the 1989 number remains lower than in 1980 (7,108), when the downward trend began.

The number of abortions performed in Canadian hospitals has been fluctuating during the Eighties, with a 6.8% drop from 1982 to 1983 from 66,319 to 61,800. Since 1983, the number has risen back to pre-1983 levels, with 66,251 in 1988.

Figure 1 illustrates the trend in total therapeutic abortions performed in Alberta and Canadian hospitals from 1970 to the present. Table A-1 in Appendix A presents the data for both Alberta and Canada.

Figure 1



Distribution of Hospitals and Therapeutic Abortions by Number of Abortions Performed

In 1989, five hospitals performing over 200 abortions each, accounted for 90.2% of all therapeutic abortions in the province. Three of these five hospitals performed a total of 5,439 abortions in 1989 (82.4% of the total), with an average of 1,813 abortions. In 1988, five hospitals, each performing over 200 abortions, accounted for 88.7% of the total abortions in that year. Three of these five hospitals performed a total of over 4,800 abortions (78.0% of the total), which averaged to over 1,600 abortions in each hospital.

In 1989, of the hospitals in Alberta that performed therapeutic abortions, 52.9% performed between 1 and 100 abortions, accounting for 3.7% of the total 6,598 cases; 29.4% of the active Alberta hospitals each performed between 101 and 400 abortions, accounting for 13.9% of the Alberta total. The remaining 17.7% of the Alberta hospitals that performed abortions in 1989 each performed over 400 abortions, representing 82.4% of abortions performed in Alberta hospitals. See Endnote (2). Further information regarding the distribution and concentration of abortions in Alberta hospitals can be found in Table A-2 of Appendix A.

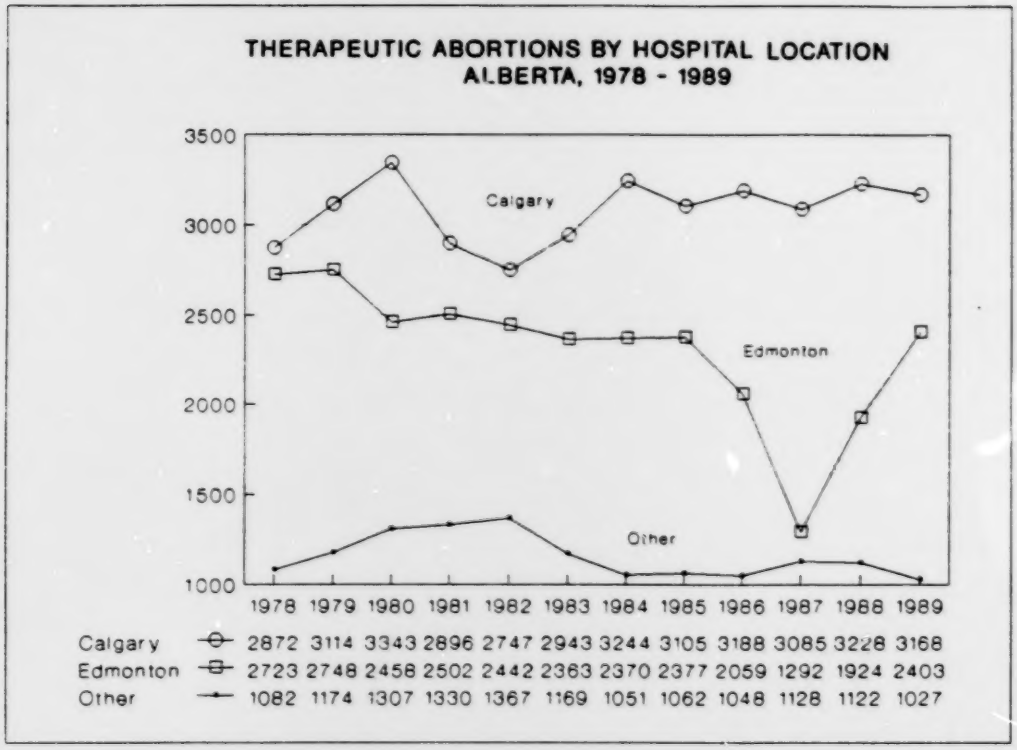
Abortions by Hospital Location

Five hospitals in Edmonton and Calgary performed therapeutic abortions in 1989. These institutions carried out 5,571 abortions, accounting for 84.4% of all abortions performed in Alberta hospitals. From 1984 to 1987 the proportion of abortions performed in Edmonton and Calgary hospitals, compared to the rest of the province, declined from 84.2% in 1984 to 79.5% in 1987. In 1988, this proportion increased to 82.1% and in 1989, increased again to 84.4%.

Since 1983, Calgary's proportion of total abortions performed in Alberta has been on a fluctuating, but upward trend, rising from 41.9% in 1982 to 50.6% in 1986, 56.0% in 1987 and 51.5% in 1988. However, in 1989, Calgary's proportion of total abortions declined to 48.0%. Edmonton's proportion, which had been fluctuating from 37.2% in 1982 to 30.7% in 1988, increased to 36.4% in 1989. A total of 3,168 therapeutic abortions were performed in Calgary in 1989, 1.9% less than in 1988. Edmonton's total for 1989 was 2,403, 24.9% more than in 1988.

Although the majority of Calgary and Edmonton cases comprised of residents of the two cities, these hospitals served as referral centres for women originating from other parts of the province and country. Figure 2 presents a historical perspective of the proportion of total abortions performed in three areas of Alberta (Edmonton, Calgary and all other locations). Details regarding the distribution of therapeutic abortions by hospital location are presented in Table A-3 of Appendix A.

Figure 2



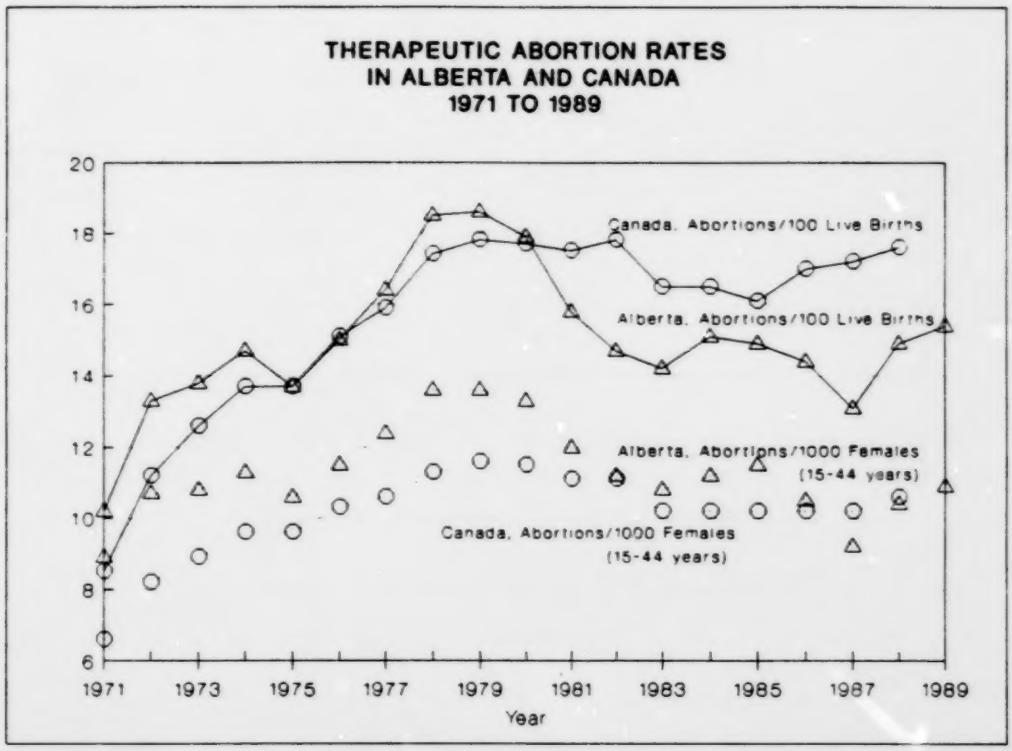
THERAPEUTIC ABORTION RATES IN ALBERTA AND CANADA AND THE PROVINCES

Two calculations of abortion rates were performed: per 1,000 females aged 15-44 years and per 100 live births. The Alberta abortion rate per 1,000 females (15-44 years) increased from 10.4 in 1988 to 10.9 in 1989. In 1989, the total female population in child bearing years increased from 1988, however, the total number of abortions increased by a greater proportion, netting an increase in the abortion rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44. In 1988, the total female population in child bearing years declined from 1987, however, the total number of abortions increased for Alberta over the same time period, netting an increase in the abortion rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44.

In 1987, a significant decline in the number of abortions led to the decline in the abortion rate per 1,000 females (9.2), as the female population in child bearing years remained close to its 1986 level. In 1986, however, Alberta experienced an increase in the female population of the 15-44 years age group. With a decrease in the total number of abortions, the abortion rate per 1,000 females declined from the 1985 figure. The average rate for Canada remained constant at 10.2 from 1983 to 1987, slightly increasing to 10.6 per 1000 females in 1988. Therapeutic abortion rates in Canada and Alberta for 1971 to 1988 (Canada), 1989 (Alberta), are provided in Appendix A-4.

Through the 1970's and 1980's, Alberta's rate of abortions per 100 live births fluctuated around 15 per 100 live births, peaking in 1979 at 18.6. The 1989 figure is 15.4. The Canadian rate remained higher than the Alberta rate from 1981 to 1988. Canadian rates for 1987 and 1988 were 17.2 and 17.6., respectively. Figure 3 presents trends in abortion rates for Alberta and Canada from 1971 to 1988.

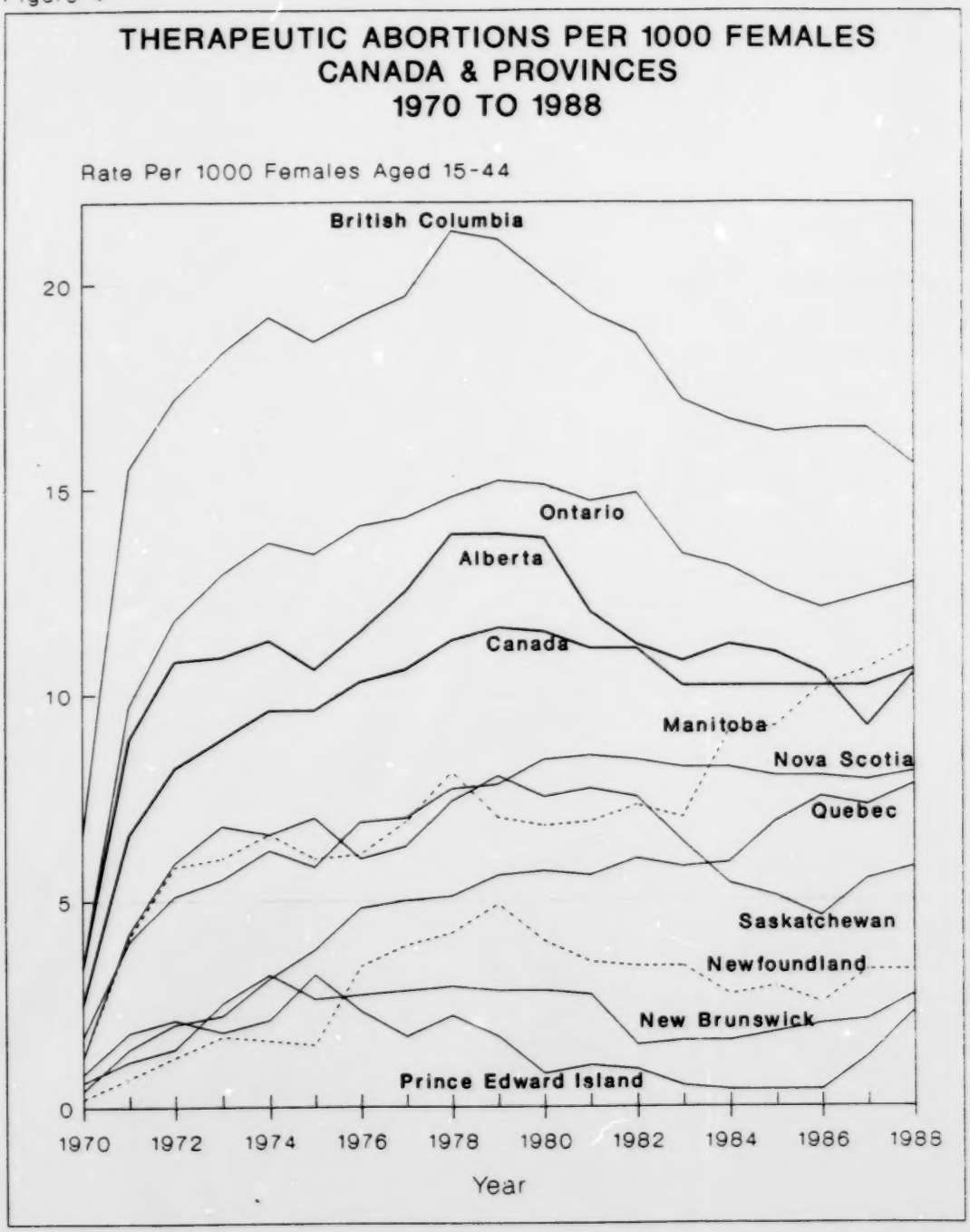
Figure 3



The Alberta abortion rate per 1,000 females aged 15-44 years was slightly higher than the Canadian rate from 1971 to 1986, but slightly lower in 1987 and 1988. Since 1981, the Alberta abortion rate per 100 live births has remained lower than the corresponding Canadian rate. This has occurred because the difference in the fertility rates (live births per 1,000 females 15-44 years) between Alberta and Canada, has been much larger than the difference in the abortion rates (in terms of 1,000 females 15-44 years). For an algebraic relationship between the therapeutic abortion rate per 100 live births and the fertility rate, see Endnote (6).

Alberta's abortion rate per 1,000 females aged 15-44 has remained the third highest in Canada since 1971 and has also remained higher than the Canadian average over the same time period. The trend in the abortion rate per 1,000 females in Alberta follows closely to that of British Columbia and Ontario, rising dramatically from 1970, through the 1970's, followed by a slight downward trend in the early 1980's. Figure 4 presents trends in abortion rates for the ten provinces and Canada, from 1971 to 1988.

Figure 4


THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS PER 1000 FEMALES
CANADA & PROVINCES
1970 TO 1988
Rate Per 1000 Females Aged 15-44
British Columbia
Ontario
Alberta
Canada
Manitoba
Nova Scotia
Quebec
Saskatchewan
Newfoundland
New Brunswick
Prince Edward Island
0
5
10
15
20
1970
1972
1974
1976
1978
1980
1982
1984
1986
1988
Year

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS

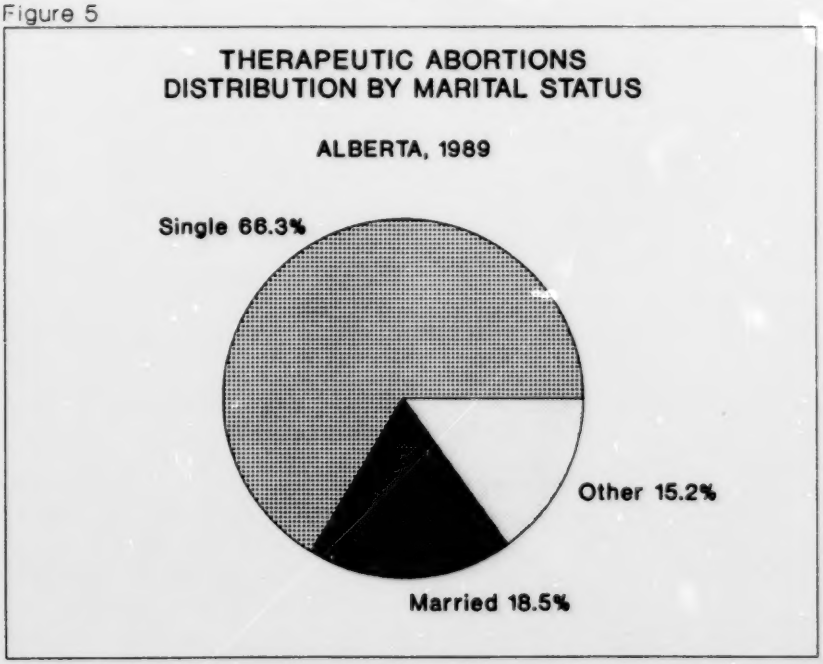
Residence

Of the 6,598 recipients of abortions in 1989, 6,502 or 98.6% were Alberta residents, 1.4% were from other provinces and fewer than 0.1% were foreign residents. Similarly, in 1988, Canadian residents accounted for 99.8% of the total of 66,251 therapeutic abortions performed in Canada. The percentage of abortions performed on residents of other provinces has been generally increasing since 1982. Of the 96 non-residents of Alberta who received abortions in Alberta hospitals in 1989, 93 were residents of other Canadian provinces or territories and 3 were from other countries. Alberta residents accounted for 1,890 days or 94.8% of the total 1,939 hospital days attributable to therapeutic abortions. Statistical detail is provided in Table A-5 of Appendix A.

Marital Status

Out of the total number of therapeutic abortions in Alberta hospitals, the proportion performed on single women rose from 64.2 in 1983 to 66.3% in 1984, but fell again to the 1985 and 1986 level of 65.8% and declined further to 64.7% in 1987. In 1988 and 1989, however, the proportion rose to the same level as in 1984, to 66.3%. The proportion for married women remained constant at 19.5% in 1984 and 1985 and has since been decreasing from 18.6% in 1986 to 17.9% in 1987 and 16.3% in 1988. In 1989, the proportion performed on married women rose to 18.5%. The remaining proportion, that is, on women who were separated, divorced, widows or living in common law arrangements i.e., the category 'other', declined from 17.4% in 1988 to 15.2% in 1989. Figure 5 presents the distribution of therapeutic abortions by marital status for Alberta in 1989. Historical data regarding this distribution are presented in Table A-6 of Appendix A.

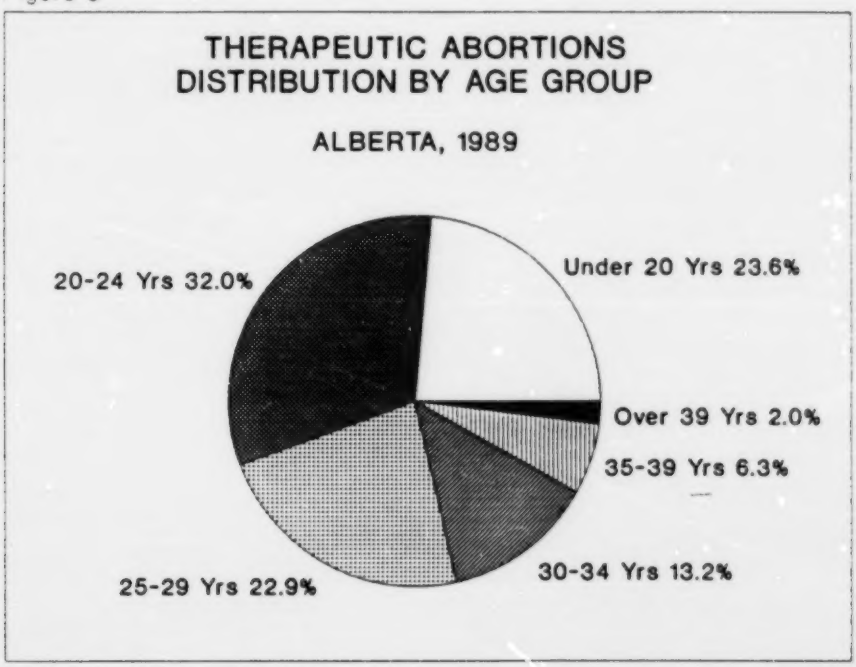
Figure 5



Age

From 1979 to 1989, out of the total number of therapeutic abortions performed in Alberta hospitals, the proportion performed on females under 20 years of age has shown a fluctuating but decreasing trend from 36.1% in 1979 to 23.6% in 1989. In 1989, 32.0% (in 1988, 32.6%), of the total therapeutic abortions performed in Alberta hospitals were received by patients aged 20 to 24 years. The mode of the distribution (i.e., the age group reporting the highest number of abortions) switched in 1980 from the 15 to 19 years age category to the 20 to 24 years group and has since remained unchanged. Details are provided in Table A-6 of Appendix A. Figure 6 illustrates the age distribution of women having abortions in Alberta hospitals in 1989.

Figure 6



Abortions Performed on Teenagers

In both Alberta and Canada, out of the total number of therapeutic abortions, the proportion performed on teenaged girls declined steadily from 1983 to 1988. In Alberta, this proportion declined from 26.6% in 1983 to 25.5% in 1988 and 23.6% in 1989, while in Canada this proportion declined from 24.9% in 1983 to 21.6% in 1988. Although Alberta's proportion of therapeutic abortions on teenagers remained higher than the corresponding proportion for Canada from 1983 to 1988, Alberta's percentage has shown a downward trend since 1982 (see Table 1). Of the 1,558 Alberta teens obtaining abortions in 1989, 94.9% were single, 1.2% were married and 3.9% were either divorced, widowed, separated or living in common-law arrangements.

TABLE 1
TEENAGE ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS,
1983 TO 1989

	ALBERTA		CANADA	
YEAR	THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS TO PATIENTS UNDER 20 YEARS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ABORTIONS FOR ALL AGES	THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS TO PATIENTS UNDER 20 YEARS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ABORTIONS FOR ALL AGES
		(%)		(%)
1989	1,558	23.6	n/a	n/a
1988	1,597	25.5	14,296	21.6
1987	1,406	25.5	13,505	21.9
1986	1,518	24.1	13,920	22.3
1985	1,650	25.2	13,849	22.9
1984	1,696	25.4	14,598	23.6
1983	1,722	26.6	16,696	24.9

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS RELATING TO THE PREGNANCY RECORD OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS

Gestation Period

The gestation period, defined as the interval between the onset of the last menstrual period and the expulsion or removal of the fetus, is calculated as the difference between the date the pregnancy is terminated and the date of the first day of the last normal menses. It is expressed in completed weeks rather than in days. In cases where the normal menses is not known, gestation is clinically estimated.

Since 1983, at least 89% of all therapeutic abortions in Alberta have been performed early in pregnancy, as defined as prior to 13 weeks. From 1983 to 1989, the proportion of total therapeutic abortions in Alberta performed in the early stages of pregnancy showed a fluctuating but increasing trend, from 89.3% to 94.9%. Similarly, the proportion performed prior to 9 weeks gestation rose in this period from 23.5% to 27.6%.

Canadian data show these proportions increasing from 87.9% in 1983 to 89.7% in 1988. Similarly, the percentage of abortions performed prior to 9 weeks gestation almost steadily increased from 27.7% in 1983 to 36.6% in 1988.

By marital status and age, 93.9% of married women in Alberta having therapeutic abortions in 1989 had their abortions early in pregnancy, an increase from 91.4% in 1988. For single women, 95.1% had their abortions early in pregnancy while for the category of 'others', 95.4%, with both figures showing increases from the 1988 percentages of 88.4% and 90.1%, respectively.

An 8% increase from 85.6% to 93.6% between 1988 and 1989 was observed for Alberta females under 20 years of age having their abortions early. Similar but less pronounced increases were observed among the 20-29 year, 30-39 year, and 40+ age groups. Overall, the percentage of Alberta's therapeutic abortions performed early in pregnancy increased from 89.2% in 1988 to 94.9% in 1989. Tables A-7 and A-8 in Appendix A provide further data.

TABLE 2
THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY GESTATION PERIOD(3) 1983 TO 1989 SELECTED YEARS

	ALBERTA			CANADA	
Gestation Period	1989	1988	1983	1988	1983
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Under 9 weeks	27.6	27.3	23.5	36.6	27.7
9 - 12 weeks	67.3	61.9	65.8	53.1	60.2
Subtotal (under 13 weeks)	94.9	89.2	89.3	89.7	87.9
13 - 16 weeks	4.1	7.7	8.7	7.4	8.8
17 - 20 weeks	0.8	3.0	1.9	2.7	3.1
21 weeks or over(4)	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Subtotal (13 weeks or over)	5.1	10.8	10.7	10.3	12.1
TOTAL(5)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1),(2) Refer to the Endnotes.
(3) Gestation periods are expressed as the number of completed weeks of pregnancy.
(4) These abortions were required due to the presence of fetal abnormalities.
(5) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

Previous Deliveries

At least one previous delivery was reported by 43.3% of all therapeutic abortion recipients in Alberta, an increase from 42.4% in 1988 and 42.2% in 1987. Canadian figures for 1988 and 1987 were 44.6% and 42.7%, respectively.

Of all single women having abortions in Alberta hospitals in 1989, 24.1% reported having at least one previous delivery. The corresponding percentages for married women and all other women were 85.8% and 75.1%, respectively.

Generally, the older the patient the greater the likelihood of a previous delivery. Of all patients 30 years of age or older, 73.0% had one or more previous deliveries as compared to 35.1% of women less than 30 years. Additional information is presented in Table 3 below and Table A-9 in Appendix A.

TABLE 3
THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS, WITH PREVIOUS DELIVERIES, 1983 TO 1989

YEAR	ALBERTA	CANADA
	(%)	(%)
1989	43.3	n/a
1988	42.4	44.6*
1987	42.2	42.7
1986	41.6	41.9
1985	39.0	40.9
1984	38.0	49.3
1983	36.4	39.1

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).
* In 1988, for 5.2% of abortion recipients, number of previous deliveries was unknown. In prior years the corresponding percentage has been around 2%.

Previous Spontaneous or Induced Abortions

Previous spontaneous abortions were reported by 10.7% of all women receiving abortions in Alberta hospitals in 1989. The comparable figure for Canada in 1988 was 7.6%.

One or more previous induced abortions were reported by 21.7% of women having an abortion in Alberta in 1989. The Canadian figure was 20.0% for 1988. Although this proportion has been on an upward trend for a number of years (since 1982), for both Alberta and Canada, Alberta's figures have been lower than those for Canada until 1988.

Among single females having abortions, 19.9% reported having had at least one previous induced abortion. The corresponding figure for married women was 23.3%, and among those who were separated, divorced, widowed, or in common-law arrangements, the figure was 27.7%. Considering the distribution by age group, 29.4% of women aged 25 to 29 years having abortions reported having had at least one previous induced abortion. Further details regarding previous induced or spontaneous abortions are provided in Table 4 below and Table A-10 of Appendix A.

TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS, WITH PREVIOUS INDUCED OR SPONTANEOUS ABORTIONS, 1983 TO 1989

	Induced Abortions		Spontaneous Abortions	
Year	Alberta	Canada	Alberta	Canada
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
1989	21.7	n/a	10.7	n/a
1988	20.7	20.0	8.7	7.6
1987	20.2	21.5	8.1	7.9
1986	18.5	24.2	7.7	6.9
1985	16.6	20.3	6.8	6.6
1984	16.6	19.5	6.9	6.5
1983	14.6	18.9	7.0	6.3

Refer to Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).

SELECTED MEDICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTION CASES

Surgical Procedures

Initial Surgical Procedures

Procedures undertaken to terminate pregnancy are referred to as initial surgical procedures. In 1989, the most frequently used initial procedure was Suction Dilation and Curettage (D&C), which accounted for 85.9% of all cases. All D&C procedures together accounted for 98.4% of initial procedures used, this represents an increase from the 1988 figure of 94.3%. The ratio of D&C procedures to all others had been on an overall upward trend since 1983. This trend can be attributed to the increased percentage of abortions being performed prior to 13 weeks gestation, as initial D&C procedures are performed when pregnancy is terminated early in gestation. Suction D&C and the combination procedure Suction-Surgical D&C have generally been favoured over Surgical D&C when curettage abortion procedures have been required. The proportion of women receiving abortions in Alberta by Saline and Urea injections and Hysterectomy and Hysterotomy procedures was relatively small. Details are provided in Table 5 below and in Table A-11 of Appendix A.

TABLE 5
THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY INITIAL SURGICAL PROCEDURES 1983 TO 1989, SELECTED YEARS

	ALBERTA			CANADA	
Initial Surgical Procedures	1989	1988	1983	1988	1983
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Surgical D&C	0.8	0.4	0.3	3.3	3.4
Suction D&C	85.9	76.2	79.2	92.8	91.5
Surgical & Suction D&C	11.7	17.7	15.3	n/a	n/a(3)
Hysterotomy	--	0.1	0.4	--	0.2
Hysterectomy	--	--	0.1	--	0.1
Saline/Saline D&C	--	--	0.3	0.7	2.4
Urea	0.2	0.2	1.7	0.1	0.6
Others	1.3	5.3	2.6	3.0	1.8
Total(4)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

-- indicates the percentage is less than 0.1.
(1),(2) Refer to the Endnotes.
(3) Due to changes in reporting procedures for Statistics Canada, all D&C procedures are coded as either surgical or suction. Combination surgical/suction D&C procedures cannot be identified.
(4) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

Subsequent Surgical Procedures

Subsequent surgical procedures may be performed when initial procedures result in complications. In 1989, 2.0% of all women having therapeutic abortions in Alberta hospitals underwent such procedures, down from the 1988 figure of 4.0%. Canadian figures, historically, have been significantly lower than those in Alberta. Only 1.0% of Canadian women having abortions required subsequent procedures in 1988.

Of all initial D&C procedures performed in Alberta in 1989, only 1.2% required subsequent methods, the same as in 1988. No subsequent procedures were performed with the initial procedure Hysterectomy or Hysterotomy.

The most frequent subsequent procedures performed were of the D&C type which collectively accounted for 75.4% of all subsequent procedures (Surgical D&C 35.1%; Suction D&C 37.3% and Surgical and Suction D&C 3.0%), a decrease over the 1988 level of 77.0%. An explanation for the rather high proportion of the D&C type may be that a high percentage of abortions were performed prior to 13 weeks gestation (a period where D&C initial and subsequent procedures generally are carried out more quickly and effectively than other procedures). Details can be found in Table 6 below and Tables A-12 and A-13 of Appendix A.

TABLE 6
THE PERCENTAGE OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS REQUIRING SUBSEQUENT SURGICAL PROCEDURES, 1983 TO 1989

ALBERTA							CANADA		
1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1988	1987	1983
(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
2.0	4.0	4.8	5.2	3.6	3.6	3.9	1.0	1.2	1.5

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).

Abortion Complications

The conditions of morbidity occurring as a result of pregnancy termination through therapeutic abortion, are defined as abortion complications. The following discussion relates only to data pertaining to the hospitalization period directly following the termination of pregnancies. In 1989, 2.6% of all women having abortions in Alberta hospitals had complications. The comparable figure for 1988 was 4.5% and 5.5% in 1987, much higher than the Canadian average for 1988 of 1.6%.

The complication which occurred most frequently in 1989 was 'retained products of conception' which accounted for 54.4% of all complications. However, this complication declined from 70.6% in 1988. The shorter the gestation, the lower the probability that a 'retained product' complication will occur. It follows then, that as the proportion of abortions performed prior to 13 weeks gestation increases, the proportion of the 'retained product' type of complication decreases.

Complications involving laceration of the cervix accounted for 9.7% of all complications; haemorrhage also accounted for 9.7%; infection for 17.9%; perforation of the uterus for 3.6% and all other complications constituted the remaining 4.6%. Details are provided in Table 7 below and in Tables A-14 and A-15 in Appendix A.

The complication rate in Alberta has always been significantly higher than the Canadian rate. The risk of complication is directly related to patient age, length of gestation, initial procedures and whether or not the patient has had previous deliveries. Alberta has had a larger proportion of patients in the higher risk groups (e.g., patients under 25 years of age with gestation longer than 9 weeks and with no previous deliveries). A more detailed explanation for the difference in complication rates between Alberta and Canada is presented in note (7) of the Endnotes.

TABLE 7
THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS WITH AT LEAST ONE ABORTION COMPLICATION, 1983 TO 1989

ALBERTA							CANADA		
1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1988	1987	1983
(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
2.6	4.5	5.5	6.0	4.5	4.2	4.3	1.6	1.8	2.1

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).

Concurrent Sterilizations

In 1989, 493 women, or 7.5% of all patients having abortions in Alberta hospitals, underwent sterilization concurrently with an abortion procedure. This represents a decrease in both the absolute number as well as the proportion of all abortion patients undergoing concurrent sterilization from 1988. The following procedures were used in 1989: tubal ligation (34.9%), tubal coagulation (14.4%), and hysterectomy (0.4%); the remainder (50.3%) were sterilized using other methods. Data regarding sterilizations performed concurrently with abortions are presented in Table 8 below.

The sterilization decision relates directly to both the woman's age and whether or not she has had previous deliveries (i.e., generally, an older woman with several previous deliveries is more likely to choose sterilization than a younger woman with no previous deliveries). Of the 493 women who underwent concurrent sterilization, 65.5% were 30 years of age or older. Patients under the age of 25 years accounted for 9.5% of all sterilizations. Regarding the 1989 age distribution of Alberta females having undergone sterilization, the mode was the 30 to 34 years category (accounting for 29.0% of all women who underwent sterilization concurrently with an abortion procedure).

Only 10.1% of all female patients sterilized had no previous deliveries. Of those patients sterilized who did have previous deliveries, 74.8% reported having had two or more. Details are presented in Table A-16 of Appendix A.

TABLE 8
THERAPEUTIC ABORTION PATIENTS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS, UNDERGOING CONCURRENT STERILIZATION, 1983 TO 1989

YEAR	ALBERTA	CANADA
	(%)	(%)
1989	7.5	n/a
1988	7.7	6.6
1987	9.1	7.1
1986	9.7	7.3
1985	8.9	7.0
1984	8.1	7.3
1983	8.0	7.2

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).

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TABLE A-1

NUMBER OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS
REPORTED BY HOSPITALS IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADA(2)
1970 TO 1989

	ALBERTA			CANADA	
YEAR	NUMBER	ANNUAL CHANGE	AS % OF CANADA	NUMBER	ANNUAL CHANGE
		(%)	(%)		(%)
1989	6,598	5.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
1988	6,274	14.0	9.5	66,251	4.1
1987	5,505	-12.5	8.7	63,662	0.2
1986	6,295	-3.8	9.9	63,508	1.2
1985	6,544	-1.8	10.4	62,740(3)	0.7
1984	6,665	2.9	10.7	62,291	0.8
1983	6,475	-1.2	10.5	61,800	-6.8
1982	6,556	-2.6	9.9	66,319	1.8
1981	6,728	-5.3	10.3	65,127	-1.1
1980	7,108	1.0	10.8	65,855	1.1
1979	7,036	5.4	10.8	65,135	4.5
1978	6,677	15.8	10.7	62,351	8.2
1977	5,766	13.4	10.0	57,620	5.7
1976	5,083	15.2	9.3	54,536	10.4
1975	4,412	-1.2	8.9	49,390	2.5
1974	4,464	8.1	9.3	48,198	11.5
1973	4,130	3.2	9.6	43,245	11.2
1972	4,002	26.3	10.3	38,905	25.7
1971	3,169	170.4	10.2	30,949	176.3
1970	1,172	-	10.5	11,200	-

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) and (2).
(3) Revised, due to additional reports from Quebec after issue of 1985 report.

TABLE A-2

DISTRIBUTION OF HOSPITALS AND THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS
BY NUMBER OF ABORTIONS PERFORMED
ALBERTA(1) 1983 TO 1989

	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
Abortion Range	Number of Hospitals Performing Abortions						
1-20	5	4	5	7	10	8	8
21-50	3	5	4	4	1	3	4
51-100	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
101-200	3	2	3	1	1	1	1
201-400	2	2	3	5	5	5	4
Over 400	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
Total(2)	17	18	19	21	21	21	21
Total Therapeutic Abortions	6,598	6,274	5,505	6,295	6,544	6,665	6,475
Abortion Range	Percent Distribution of Abortions Performed						
1-20	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.6	1.7	0.9	1.2
21-50	1.7	2.3	3.0	1.7	0.4	1.2	1.7
51-100	0.8	2.3	1.5	0.9	0.8	1.0	-
101-200	6.1	5.9	7.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.4
201-400	7.8	10.7	14.1	20.3	19.4	20.2	17.2
Over 400	82.4	78.0	72.9	74.8	75.9	75.1	77.5
Total(2)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-3

THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS BY HOSPITAL LOCATION, ALBERTA(1)
1978 TO 1989

	CALGARY			EDMONTON			OTHER		
YEAR	NUMBER	ANNUAL CHANGE	% OF ALL SERVICES	NUMBER	ANNUAL CHANGE	% OF ALL SERVICES	NUMBER	ANNUAL CHANGE	% OF ALL SERVICES
		(%)	(%)		(%)	(%)		(%)	(%)
1989	3,168	-1.9	48.0	2,403	24.9	36.4	1,027	-8.5	15.6
1988	3,228	4.6	51.5	1,924	48.9	30.7	1,122	-0.5	17.9
1987	3,085	-3.2	56.0	1,292	-37.3	23.5	1,128	7.6	20.5
1986	3,188	2.7	50.6	2,059	-13.4	32.7	1,048	-1.3	16.6
1985	3,105	-4.3	47.4	2,377	0.3	36.3	1,062	1.0	16.2
1984	3,244	10.2	48.7	2,370	0.3	35.6	1,051	-10.1	15.8
1983	2,943	7.1	45.4	2,363	-3.2	36.5	1,169	-14.5	18.1
1982	2,747	-5.1	41.9	2,442	-2.4	37.2	1,367	2.8	20.9
1981	2,896	-13.4	43.0	2,502	1.8	37.2	1,330	1.8	19.8
1980	3,343	7.4	47.0	2,458	-10.6	34.6	1,307	11.3	18.4
1979	3,114	8.4	44.3	2,748	0.9	39.0	1,174	8.5	16.7
1978	2,872	7.2	43.0	2,723	29.4	40.8	1,082	10.3	16.2

Refer to the Endnotes for note (1).

TABLE A-4

THERAPEUTIC ABORTION RATES IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADA(2)
1971 TO 1989

	ALBERTA(3,4,5)		CANADA	
YEAR	RATE PER 1,000 FEMALES 15-44 YEARS	RATE PER 100 LIVE BIRTHS	RATE PER 1,000 FEMALES 15-44 YEARS	RATE PER 100 LIVE BIRTHS
1989	10.9	15.4	n/a	n/a
1988	10.4	14.9	10.6	17.6
1987	9.2	13.1	10.2	17.2
1986	10.5	14.4	10.2	17.0
1985	11.0	14.9	10.2(1)	16.1(1)
1984	11.2	15.1	10.2	16.5
1983	10.8	14.2	10.2	16.5
1982	11.2	14.7	11.1	17.8
1981	12.0	15.8	11.1	17.5
1980	13.3	17.9	11.5	17.7
1979	13.6	18.6	11.6	17.8
1978	13.6	18.5	11.3	17.4
1977	12.4	16.4	10.6	15.9
1976	11.5	15.0	10.3	15.1
1975	10.6	13.7	9.6	13.7
1974	11.3	14.7	9.6	13.7
1973	10.8	13.8	8.9	12.6
1972	10.7	13.3	8.2	11.2
1971	8.9	10.2	6.6	8.5

Refer to the Endnotes for notes (1) to (5).
(1) Revised in 1986 publication to reflect 1,784 reports received from Quebec after the publication of 1985 data.

TABLE A-5

**THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS,
DISTRIBUTION BY PATIENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 1983 TO 1989**

Place of Residence	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Alberta	98.55	98.87	99.27	99.07	99.31	99.16	99.14
Other Provinces	1.41	1.10	0.71	0.88	0.67	0.83	0.80
Out of Canada	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.06
Total(2)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.00% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-6

**WOMEN RECEIVING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS
DISTRIBUTION BY MARITAL STATUS AND AGE, 1983 TO 1989**

	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
Total Therapeutic Abortions	6,598	6,274	5,505	6,295	6,544	6,665	6,475
Distribution by Marital Status	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Single	66.3	66.3	64.7	65.8	65.8	66.3	64.2
Married	18.5	16.3	17.9	18.6	19.5	19.5	19.7
Others(2)	15.2	17.4	17.4	15.6	14.7	14.2	16.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Distribution by Age Group	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Under 15	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.9
15 - 19	22.8	24.9	24.7	23.5	24.3	24.7	25.7
20 - 24	32.0	32.6	32.8	35.3	34.6	35.3	37.1
25 - 29	22.9	22.1	22.4	21.1	21.7	21.5	20.1
30 - 34	13.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	11.7	11.1	10.3
35 - 39	6.3	5.8	5.3	5.7	5.4	4.8	4.6
40 - 44	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.2
45 or Over	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
TOTAL(3)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Includes women who were separated, divorced, widowed or living in common-law arrangements.
(3) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-7

WOMEN RECEIVING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY GESTATION PERIOD, 1983 TO 1989

	ALBERTA						
Gestation Period(2)	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Under 9 wks.	27.6	27.3	27.8	25.4	29.4	27.6	23.5
9 - 12 wks.	67.3	61.9	62.4	64.7	62.1	62.3	65.8
Subtotal (under 13 wks.)	94.9	89.2	90.2	90.1	91.5	89.9	89.3
13 - 16 wks.	4.1	7.7	6.2	7.3	6.3	7.9	8.7
17 - 20 wks.	0.8	3.0	3.4	2.6	2.0	2.1	1.9
21 wks. or over(3)	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Subtotal (13 wks. or over)	5.1	10.8	9.8	9.9	8.5	10.0	10.7
TOTAL(4)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Gestation periods are expressed as the number of completed weeks of pregnancy.
(3) These abortions were required due to the presence of fetal abnormalities.
(4) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-8

WOMEN RECEIVING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS BEFORE THIRTEEN WEEKS OF GESTATION IN ALBERTA(1) AND CANADIAN(2) HOSPITALS, PERCENTAGE BY MARITAL STATUS AND AGE, 1983 TO 1989

	ALBERTA							CANADA	
Marital Status/Age	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1988	1983
MARITAL STATUS									
Single	95.1	88.4	90.0	88.8	90.8	89.5	88.5	88.9	86.6
Married	93.9	91.4	92.2	92.8	93.9	92.2	90.8	91.7	91.2
Others(3)	95.4	90.1	88.8	92.3	91.8	88.8	90.6	91.4	89.2
AGE									
Under 20 yrs.	93.6	85.6	88.1	85.7	87.5	87.0	87.3	85.0	82.2
20 - 29 yrs.	95.1	89.8	90.4	90.7	92.5	90.3	89.4	90.2	88.8
30 - 39 yrs.	95.9	92.1	92.6	94.3	94.3	93.4	92.6	93.0	92.8
40 yrs. and Over	96.1	91.2	92.1	88.0	93.5	87.5	89.2	90.4	90.6
TOTAL	94.9	89.2	90.2	90.1	91.5	89.9	89.3	89.7	87.9

(1),(2) Refer to the Endnotes.
(3) Includes women who were separated, divorced, widowed or living in common-law arrangements as well as those women receiving abortions whose marital status was unknown.

TABLE A-9

WOMEN RECEIVING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS,
DISTRIBUTION BY MARITAL STATUS,
AGE GROUP AND PREVIOUS DELIVERIES, 1989

	Previous Deliveries						
	None	1	2	3	4 or More	Not Stated	Total(3)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
TOTAL	56.7	20.1	15.8	5.2	2.2	-	100.0
MARITAL STATUS							
Single	75.9	17.2	5.2	1.1	0.6	-	100.0
Married	14.2	22.5	42.1	15.3	5.7	0.1	100.0
Others(2)	24.9	29.9	29.9	10.9	4.5	-	100.0
AGE GROUP							
Under 20	87.0	11.2	1.8	0.1	-	-	100.0
20 - 24	64.3	22.7	10.7	2.1	0.2	-	100.0
25 - 29	42.9	26.2	21.4	6.4	3.0	-	100.0
30 - 34	31.0	21.4	29.2	12.9	5.5	0.1	100.0
35 - 39	21.1	17.9	39.0	14.1	7.9	-	100.0
40 - 44	19.7	12.8	37.6	22.2	6.8	0.9	100.0
45 and Over	16.7	-	16.7	41.7	25.0	-	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Includes women who were separated, divorced, widowed or living in common-law arrangements.
(3) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-10

WOMEN RECEIVING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY MARITAL STATUS, AGE GROUP AND PREVIOUS INDUCED ABORTIONS, 1989

	Previous Induced Abortions				
	NONE	1	2	3 OR MORE	TOTAL(3)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
TOTAL	78.3	18.1	3.0	0.6	100.0
MARITAL STATUS					
Single	80.2	16.9	2.5	0.5	100.0
Married	76.6	18.8	3.8	0.7	100.0
Others(2)	72.3	22.4	4.3	1.0	100.0
AGE GROUP					
Under 20	89.8	9.4	0.8	0.1	100.0
20 - 24	77.8	19.2	2.6	0.3	100.0
25 - 29	70.6	23.7	4.6	1.1	100.0
30 - 34	73.0	22.2	3.9	0.9	100.0
35 - 39	75.4	17.0	6.7	1.0	100.0
40 - 44	83.8	14.5	0.9	0.8	100.0
45 and Over	83.3	16.7	-	-	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Includes women who were separated, divorced, widowed or living in common-law arrangements.
(3) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-11

WOMEN RECEIVING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY INITIAL SURGICAL PROCEDURES, 1983 TO 1989

	ALBERTA						
Initial Surgical Procedures	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Surgical D&C	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.3
Suction D&C	85.9	76.2	64.8	74.6	77.0	76.6	79.2
Surgical & Suction D&C	11.7	17.7	28.4	19.1	18.4	18.7	15.3
Hysterotomy	--	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Hysterectomy	--	--	--	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Saline/Saline D&C	-	-	-	-	-	0.3	0.3
Urea	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	1.5	1.8
Others	1.3	5.3	5.5	4.3	3.5	2.3	2.6
TOTAL(2)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes for note (1).
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-12

SUBSEQUENT SURGICAL PROCEDURES IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY INITIAL SURGICAL PROCEDURE, 1989

Initial Procedure	Total	Surgical D&C	Suction D&C	Surgical & Suction D&C	Hysterotomy	Hysterectomy	Saline	Urea	Other
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Subsequent Procedure									
None Reported	98.0	98.2	98.8	98.7	100.0	100.0	-	20.0	43.5
Surgical D&C	0.7	1.8	0.4	0.3	-	-	-	50.0	22.4
Suction D&C	0.8	-	0.4	0.1	-	-	-	30.0	25.9
Surgical & Suction D&C	0.1	-	0.1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-
Hysterotomy	--	-	--	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hysterectomy	-	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-
Saline	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	0.5	-	0.3	0.9	-	-	-	-	8.2
TOTAL(2)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	100.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-13

FREQUENT SUBSEQUENT PROCEDURES IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SUBSEQUENT PROCEDURES, 1989

Subsequent Procedure	Percentage of Total Subsequent Procedures
	(%)
Surgical D&C	35.1
Suction D&C	37.3
Surgical & Suction D&C	3.0
Hysterotomy	0.7
Hysterectomy	-
Other	23.9
TOTAL(2)	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-14

THERAPEUTIC ABORTION COMPLICATIONS TREATED IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY NATURE OF COMPLICATION AND PERIOD OF GESTATION, 1989

	Gestation Period(2)					
Nature of Complication	Under 9 Weeks	9 - 12 Weeks	13 - 16 Weeks	17 - 20 Weeks	21 Weeks(3) Or Over	Total
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Retained Products of Conception	36.7	44.1	69.4	78.8	100.0	54.4
Perforation of Uterus	6.7	5.4	-	-	-	3.6
Laceration of Cervix	13.3	12.9	5.6	3.0	-	9.7
Haemorrhage	6.7	10.8	11.1	9.1	-	9.7
Infection	33.3	21.5	8.3	6.1	-	17.9
Others	3.3	5.4	5.6	3.0	-	4.6
TOTAL(4)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Gestation periods are expressed as the number of completed weeks of pregnancy.
(3) These abortions were required due to the presence of fetal abnormalities.
(4) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-15

THERAPEUTIC ABORTION COMPLICATIONS TREATED IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE OF INITIAL SURGICAL PROCEDURE, 1989

Initial Surgical Procedure	Nature of Complication						
	Retained Products Of Conception	Laceration Of Cervix	Haemorrhage	Perforated Uterus	Infection	Others	Total(2)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Surgical D&C	50.0	-	50.0	-	-	-	100.0
Suction D&C	42.2	11.0	11.9	5.5	22.9	6.4	100.0
Surgical & Suction D&C	15.0	30.0	5.0	5.0	40.0	5.0	100.0
Hysterotomy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hysterectomy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saline/Saline D&C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Urea	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	100.0
Other	85.7	1.8	7.1	-	3.6	1.8	100.0
TOTAL	54.4	9.7	9.7	3.6	17.9	4.6	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

TABLE A-16

WOMEN STERILIZED FOLLOWING ABORTION IN ALBERTA(1) HOSPITALS, DISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUP AND NUMBER OF PREVIOUS DELIVERIES, 1989

Age Group	Number of Previous Deliveries						
	0	1	2	3	4 Or More	Not Stated	All Patients
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Under 20	4.0	1.4	-	-	-	-	0.6
20 - 24	6.0	5.4	12.4	9.3	3.4	-	8.9
25 - 29	22.0	32.4	23.3	21.3	30.5	-	24.9
30 - 34	22.0	24.3	31.2	28.7	33.9	-	29.0
35 - 39	26.0	25.7	24.3	21.3	25.4	-	24.1
40 - 44	16.0	10.8	8.9	15.7	6.8	-	11.2
45 & Over	4.0	-	-	3.7	-	-	1.2
TOTAL(2)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0

(1) Refer to the Endnotes.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to the rounding procedures used.

APPENDIX B

ALBERTA HOSPITALS PERFORMING THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR 1989

Brooks Health Centre
Calgary General
Foothills Provincial General, Calgary
Drumheller General
Charles Camsell, Edmonton
Royal Alexandra, Edmonton
University of Alberta, Edmonton
Fort Saskatchewan General
Grande Prairie General
High Prairie Regional Health Complex
Hinton General
Innisfail Health Care Centre
Lethbridge Regional (General Centre)
Medicine Hat and District (General Centre)
Peace River Municipal
Provost Municipal Health Care Centre
Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre

ENDNOTES

(1) Includes both residents and non-residents of Alberta who received therapeutic abortions in Alberta hospitals. Source: **Alberta Therapeutic Abortion File.**

(2) Includes only Canadian women who received therapeutic abortions in Canadian hospitals and for whom selected demographic and medical items of information were available. Source: Statistics Canada, **Therapeutic Abortions**, Catalogue 82-211.

(3) The number used in calculating Alberta rates includes therapeutic abortions performed on women of all ages, in other words, therapeutic abortions performed on patients outside the 15 to 44 year age group are also included in the total therapeutic abortion count.

(4) The number of therapeutic abortions received by Alberta women in Canadian hospitals from 1971 to 1988 are those reported by Statistics Canada in **Therapeutic Abortions**, Catalogue 82-211. These figures are used to derive the province's abortion rates per 1,000 females (15-44 years) and per 100 live births. The rates, however, have been recalculated for 1971 to 1988 using revised population and live birth data from the following sources:

Population: Statistics Canada, **Population, Revised Annual Estimates of Population by Sex and Age for Canada and the Provinces**, 1971 to 1976, Catalogue 91-518; **Final Intercensal Estimates of the Population by Sex and Age, Canada and the Provinces, June 1, 1977 to 1981**, 1977 to 1981 revised intercensal estimates based on the 1981 Census of Canada.

Postcensal **Annual Estimates of Population by Marital Status, Age, Sex and Components of Growth for Canada and the Provinces**, Catalogue 91-210, June 1, 1982 to 1988.

Live Births: Statistics Canada, **Vital Statistics, Volume 1, Births and Deaths**, Catalogue 84-204, 1971 to 1988.

(5) The 1988 rates are calculated using the total number of therapeutic abortions performed in Alberta hospitals in 1989, including therapeutic abortions performed for non-residents of the province. Alberta women who received therapeutic abortions in Canadian hospitals outside of Alberta are not included. The source of population and live birth data are:

Population: Statistics Canada, **Postcensal Annual Estimates of Population by Marital Status, Age, Sex and Components of Growth for Canada and the Provinces,** Catalogue 91-210, June 1, 1989.

Live Births: 1989 preliminary live birth counts were obtained from Vital Statistics, Division of Alberta Health.

(6) Historically, both the therapeutic abortion rate per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 years (TA/POP) and the fertility rate (FR), defined here as live births (LB) per 1,000 females aged 15 to 44 years, have been higher in Alberta than in Canada. Since 1981, the difference between the fertility rates of Alberta and Canada has been significantly greater than the difference between the abortion rates. Therefore, the abortion rate per 100 livebirths (TA/100LB) has been lower in Alberta than in Canada for the past five years. The algebraic expression relating the two abortion rates and the fertility rates is as follows:

$$\frac{TA}{100LB} = \frac{TA}{(FR)POP(1/100)} = \frac{TA/POP}{FR(1/100)}$$

(7) The notable difference in the complication rate between Canada and Alberta is a result of many interrelated factors. Statistics Canada's studies reveal that complication risks tend to be higher with patients under 25 years of age (particularly under 20 years) than with more mature patients. The proportion of patients under 25 years has generally been higher in Alberta compared to Canada as a whole. Complication risks also tend to increase with gestation. Although Alberta performs a large proportion of abortions prior to 13 weeks of pregnancy, a relatively large number of these are performed between 9 and 13 weeks. Statistics Canada claims that a two week postponement of an abortion from 9-10 weeks to 11-12 weeks can result in a 54% increase in the risk of complications. Since some initial procedures are associated with higher incidence of complications than others, as the mix of initial procedures varies across the provinces, so will the average complication rates. Finally, collecting nation-wide data on abortion complications is a delicate issue as variations in the diagnosis of such complications may result in the failure of provinces to report in uniform manner.

Source: Statistics Canada, "Early Complication Risks of Legal Abortions, Canada, 1975-1980", **Canadian Journal of Public Health**, Vol. 73, November/December 1982, p. 396-400.